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WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

NOT long ago, a well-known religious newspaper proposed the question: What is the Church? and requested an answer. It is impossible to say in what spirit the request was made—not, perhaps, in much seriousness—but, coming from such a quarter, it struck us with an air of novelty. Is it possible, we said, that after more than sixty generations of Christians have lived and died in the faith, and sixty generations of the most learned men in the world have thought and written on the subject, it is still an open question what the Church is? But after some reflection, we felt that the question might well have been put in all seriousness; and we asked ourselves what the answer ought to be. “The Kingdom of God on earth;” “The Mystical Body of Christ,” we replied at once; and, “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance,”—while a cloud of other answers, put forth under varying circumstances, rose up before us; but each and all evidently needed definition, and we did not feel ourselves greatly helped.

The result of our cogitation was, that, trite as the question seemed on its face, we felt it to be one of the gravest import—one that, in this day of upheavals, really presses for an answer; and we determined to do our best to make explicit what we think is implied in the above answers. This we now proceed to do.

The first great fact that arrests attention in this connection is sin. There would be no place for the Church if there were no sin in the world. What then is sin, and how did it come into the world? For the faithful there can be no doubt whatever as to the answer. Holy Scripture tells us how Adam came to lose his personal uprightness; and whether the story of the fall be regarded as the recital of an

actual fact, or as an allegory, pure and simple, no one can doubt that the point of the story is to show that the disobedience of Adam brought the calamity of sin upon him and his race.

Now, let the neo-critics say what they may as to the authorship, date, or other facts of this story, it is safe to affirm that no scientific statement can give better form to the direful truth it discloses. There can be no good, apart from the notion of a recognized obligation; and no personal and moral evil, except in disobedience to such obligation. Man did fail in the beginning, whenever and wherever that may have been, just as he is failing to-day, by seizing or accepting that which he knew or knows to be forbidden him; and so sin came into the world, and remains a daily fact in the consciousness of men, through disobedience.

Whatever metaphysical speculations may be indulged on the subject of freedom in man, the indisputable fact of experience compels us to admit that, at least, we think ourselves in possession of the power to govern our own purposes, and feel ourselves in the daily exercise of such power. We have, thus, the same certainty that we are self-determining, as we have that there is any self, or anything to be determined.

Then since the consciousness of obligation, either self-imposed or compelled from without, is absolutely necessary to the idea of good and evil, it is impossible for one to commit sin, and so become a sinner, without the conscious violation of a recognized law; and it is impossible to be a right-doer, and so become, in so far, righteous, without the conscious compliance with such recognized obligation. Actual sin cannot, in the nature of things, be forced upon any; and rightness or holiness cannot be bestowed upon any. The sinner may be saved from the penalties of sin by another, or he may have bestowed upon him the benefits of virtue, not his own, but in either case he remains what he was before. In short, if we are to recognize and defend the prerogative of freedom in man's nature, it is inconceivable that anyone

can become evil, or be made righteous, except through the active coöperation of his own free activity.

But all free activities are not therefore moral. Only those whose ends are "good" are moral. Then what is "good"? There are two obvious senses in which we may use this word. We may mean anything which promotes the growth or development of "thing"—as the building up of tissue, or which causes any economic or æsthetic change, resulting in pleasure. We speak of good health, good food, good fortune, and in general anything which has value; that is, ministers to the happiness and general well-being of man. These all fall under one or other of two heads—the pleasurable or the useful. Attempts have been made to find the end of all human effort in each of these; giving rise to the system of Hedonism, with Hobbes as its most notable advocate in modern times; and Utilitarianism, with Bentham as its most notable exponent. Both systems, together with a number of other philosophies, may be classed under the general head—selfism.

The other sense of "good" is synonymous with virtue. This is moral good, and finds its essence, never in the foreseen and reckoned-upon gain to self, but in the betterment of others. This is altruism. Self-satisfaction, or self-advantage of any sort, at the cost of another's well-being, or in violation of one's sense of obligation to another, is evil. The two are contradictories. Selfness looks inward, and in its ultimate nature is idolatry; altruism looks outward, and in its highest term is worship. In selfness there can be no obligation; for no law can emanate from the self, which the self cannot at any time set aside. Any action which has mere satisfaction or personal gain as its motive, is purely acquisitive, and the rule of action cannot be binding longer than the foreseen advantage is held to by the self.

In selfless, or altruistic volition, the flow is from within, outward. There is a recognition of law laid upon the self from an acknowledged authority, and so obligation emerges. The source of law with the child begins with parents and

masters, and rises through the stages of all human law in society and government. But one finds that there is a source of law, which is the ground of all human law, proceeding from the ultimate Lawgiver. His laws present themselves in a two-fold order—exoteric (from without), and esoteric (from within). One is the phase of determinism, the limited, the fixed—the other is the phase of freedom, the uncaused and creative. The one we may call Nature, the other Spirit.

Now Nature, with her fixed and rigid order, bears in her hands rewards and punishments, visible and open.¹ Her voice is, Do this, and you shall have your pay in current coin: or, If you do it not, behold the rod! It is mercantile and mechanical. One who follows the bent of a desire does it because he has the promise of gratification. One who makes an effort of any sort does it because he expects return in money, in skill, in learning, in happiness or power, in one form or another. He does not, it is true, always get what he expects. That would be too much—that would mean the entire satisfaction and saturation of his nature; it would put an end to all effort: but he does get just what nature promises, if he be at the pains to inform himself. The plea of ignorance will not avail. One who takes a dose of arsenic, under the conviction that he is taking magnesia, will not be saved the consequences on account of his ignorance. Nature holds every man to the same account as if he were omniscient. She gives him the power to inquire into, and find out her ways, with abundant warning that she makes no exceptions.

In the order of Nature, we are but accepting God's gifts—using them rightly to our own profit, or wrongly to our hurt. This is the acquisitive, the inflowing phase of man's existence, in which self is consciously the object and recipient of good gifts. The gifts are good, in a right sense, only as we look from the gifts to the Giver—are good, because they are given. They bear the stamp of altruism, God being the

¹Cf. *Mechanism and Personality*. p. 318, *et passim*.

source and centre of their outflow. They are good *to* us, because they meet the needs and desires of our nature; but not *in* us, because they are but occasions and material of self-activity.

The radical fault in all systems of morality founded in self-ism is, that they cannot rise above good in this reflected or borrowed sense. They rest in good *to* man from God, and cannot logically find room for good *in* man toward God and his neighbor through a self-ordered outgo.

This outgo—this good *to* other—is the esoteric phase, for and through which alone the lower phase is entitled to reality. It is the exact contradictory of the exoteric law of Nature in its external relation to us. In it the movement is outward from self, in obedience to a recognized obligation laid upon the self. It is the exercise in man of a free activity for the betterment or glory of another, man being, in so far, an original cause, a creator. Though infinitely less in degree, it is of kindred nature to that natural good which we have been considering, regarded from the side of its divine source. That looked from God toward man; this looks from man toward God and his fellow men. God gives to man; man, by the prerogative given him, renders back to God. God, as absolutely free and full of infinite power, is the source of all good. Man, the image of his Creator, by the prerogative of self-activity, is the source of some good. And just as all natural good, the world-gift, is the creative outgo from the All-giver, so the limited, the little-good man is competent to, is the purposive outgo from self. This is virtue; this is selflessness.

In this light, we must utterly abandon the notion that man can be made holy by any means beyond the exercise of his own power of self-determinism. We have said nothing so far of our emotive nature, and so nothing of the one fundamental and all-pervading motive in the sphere of virtue—love. The mere discovery of meaning in the world would result in nothing. If everything were indifferent, there could be no movement. Desires and aversions must be felt

before there can be any ground for effort. There would be no possibility of a "good will" apart from the grace and help of God in the movement, or desire for good, giving rise to the sense of obligation.

The most that one can conceive as possible toward saving man from—that is, helping him to get the better of and recover from—his already sinful nature, with, at the same time, respect for his divine prerogative of freedom, is the establishment of what, in modern phrase, is called an environment, which shall best promote and enable an altruistic movement in the sinner by the right exercise of his divine power of self-determinism. This is just what Christ did in setting up his kingdom, the Church.

But in all this we are quietly assuming mystery upon mystery. In personality we have a fact which admits of no explanation. The chasm between the physical world and consciousness is impassable in thought. We are compelled to relegate the ultimate explanation of it all to an Infinite Mover; and it ought to be a satisfaction to the faithful to know that even Herbert Spencer, the recognized exponent of agnostic philosophy, is clear that there is such an ultimate source of all phenomena. "I held at the outset," he says, "and continue to hold, that the inscrutable existence which science in the last resort is compelled to recognize as unreached by its deepest analysis of matter, motion, thought, and feeling, stands toward our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the creative power asserted by theology." Undoubtedly the highest possible term in the work of this "inscrutable existence" is reached in the problem of how man is to be saved from sin; and it is not only conceivable, but necessary to think that such inscrutable power should carry on the work toward establishing for man the best possible instrumentality for the right exercise of the supreme element of his nature in the upbuilding of his personality. It is in this light that the fundamental mystery of the Christian faith—the Incarnation—becomes a rational fact. Moreover, we see in it the highest

exemplification of the riddle of philosophy in all ages—How is the one many, and the many one? How can the Infinite and the Finite, the Absolute and the Relative coëxist? They stand out in thought as contradictories, each being what the other is not; and yet there is no object, no act of knowing in which their harmony is not implied. Old as Parmenides and Heraclitus, this difficulty in thought has baffled the wit of man; and yet no intellect with training enough to understand the question, fails to see its practical solution everywhere in fact. The divine and human elements in One Person is the doctrine of the “Word made flesh,” and while it must, in the nature of things, remain inexplicable in the domain of the understanding, it is no more irrational than any other fact of daily life, however far it stands in dignity and wonder above all others.

Holding fast, then, by the fact of the Incarnation, we go on to inquire why Christ came into the world as man, and what he did among men; and here we enter upon a region of thought which is full of confusion and error. The current of popular teaching is, that the Son of God, moved by compassion for man, came into the world to appease and satisfy the righteous anger of God the Father, and, having come, he submitted himself to a shameful death, paying the penalty which man, as guilty, had no means to pay; and man, thus redeemed by the price paid, has only to avail himself of the benefits thereof by an act of faith, and to become holy by the transference of the transcendent merits of the Divine Victim to himself.

This is a naked form of statement, it is true, but not intentionally unjust to the phase of doctrine so enormously developed by the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century. It will be perceived at once how incompatible it is with the psychological and ethical facts of man's nature, as set forth in the outline just given. Nor is it compatible with Holy Scripture. There is no foundation in the many declarations of our Lord that he was moved by compassion, and volunteered to become man.

The love and compassion of Jesus Christ for man is everywhere conspicuous, but the love of the Father is the precedent and fundamental truth of the whole gospel. Loving obedience is the sole motive which the Divine Master ever gives as a reason for his coming into the world. So far from volunteering, he expressly affirms that he did not come of himself: "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." Everywhere he speaks of himself as sent. There is no warrant in Holy Scripture for those lines of Milton, in which are imbedded the popular error we are combating, where the Almighty Father is represented as calling upon the heavenly host for a volunteer to become mortal and suffer death as a ransom for man.

It is not too much to say, perhaps, that this doctrine is answerable for the wide-spread infidelity of our day. It has got itself lodged in the popular consciousness as necessary to be believed; and is accordingly the object of attack by unbelievers, who, not being able to distinguish this pseudo Christianity from the true faith, in repudiating it, and the direful consequences which follow from it, turn away from the gospel altogether.

The Son of Man was *sent* into the world as he declares specifically, over and over again; and the motive of his stupendous mission was love, not anger or hate. He obeyed through love, love of God and love of man; and in the execution of that mission, which he only could have fulfilled, he put perfect and complete obedience over against the disobedience through which sin came and continues in the nature of man. We find thus the foundation principle of the gospel of Christ to be just what a sound psychology teaches as to sin and holiness.

But he tells us, not only that he was sent, but that he was sent to do a work: "I must work the work of him that sent me." But what was the work which it was his mission to accomplish? Certainly not primarily to submit himself as a victim to a shameful death. The suffering and death came as the awful consequences of his work. They lay

necessarily in the way of the work he was commanded to do, and he submitted as a part of his obedience—he was “obedient unto death.”

Then what was the work? Surely that which he declared to be the end for which he was born—that which he actually accomplished—the one thing to which he systematically addressed himself throughout his whole life, and in consequence of which he was brought to death—namely, the establishment of his kingdom on earth. “Art thou a king then? Thou sayest it, because (*ἔτι*) I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”

If there is anything clear in the history of the work of Jesus, it is the reality of his kingship and his kingdom. Think of the facts. John the Baptist came declaring “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our Lord appears before the multitude gathered about the Baptist, to begin his mission. As he is the obedient Son of God, so he is the obedient Son of Man, and so he begins his public work by submitting himself as man, to the divinely constituted authority among men, in an act of obedience to this last and greatest prophet under the law. He submits himself to John’s baptism, and receives a visible anointing of the Holy Ghost, and an audible certification of his mission out of heaven. He comes forth from his solemn preparation in the wilderness, and we are told that, “From that time forth Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ discloses for the first time his sovereign authority. His first words are of the kingdom. He uses the absolutely imperative form of speech; warns the world that he comes not to destroy, but to fulfil the law; tells the multitude who shall be first and who shall be last in his kingdom; bids them pray for the kingdom; to seek it above all things, declaring that not every one who cries unto him shall enter it, but they who do the will of the Father.

In his subsequent teachings the kingdom was his constant theme.¹ More than half of the parables are express similitudes of the kingdom, and all bear upon it directly.

Of course it will be objected—and such is the unfortunate teaching of many doctors—that all this is figurative, that he was speaking of a spiritual kingdom, not a reality.

Spiritual it was; and just for that reason the more real; figurative it was not, as clearly appears from what followed. In the first place, apart from the authority which came to him out of heaven, Jesus Christ was the lineal son of King David; and so king of the Jews by hereditary right—a right which he openly claimed at the close of his labors.

If now we follow his acts, we shall see how systematically he gave objective expression to the all-absorbing conviction which possessed him. He gathers disciples about him, and singles out certain of them to whom he is to commit full authority, sending them as he was sent, “to preach the kingdom;” and if he taught with authority, he does not address himself less imperatively to those from whom he expects personal obedience. He uses no persuasion—no entreaty. He says to Peter and Andrew, “Follow me,” and so with the others. He selects the Twelve and names them “Apostles.” Afterward, he appoints “other seventy,” and sends them forth to do his will.

We cannot mistake the significance of these acts and these numbers. We cannot think that the Son of Man would fall into imitation of the Jewish polity—the twelve tribes and the Sanhedrim, things so characteristic in Jewish history—without the deepest purpose; and surely we are not to think that he exercised the prerogative of royalty in appointing “ambassadors” through a mere mimetic spirit.

But the time draws near when he is to bring his work on earth to a close. There must be no doubt as to the reality of his kingship. He is going up to the royal city for the last time. He enters it now, not as a subject, but as a king.

¹ Cf. *The Church Eclectic* for January and February, 1892.

With the dreadful certainty of death clearly before him, he himself takes order for a royal progress, rude and simple though it be. The multitude strip themselves of their garments to spread them in his way; while they cry, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna to the Son of David!"

But does he, the teacher of meekness and humility, really know what the cry is that comes from the people? There were some that day who heard it with indignation. They said, "Master, rebuke thy disciples;" but he answered, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." And again, when he had come near the Temple, the priests and scribes, hearing this cry, called his attention to it; and, with a withering rebuke, he again accepted it. The lowly Nazarene had openly proclaimed himself king; and, as the Great High Priest, he takes possession of the Temple of God!

He is, therefore, charged with a double offense—he had made himself God; he had made himself King. Both charges are true; and he is "witnessing to the truth!" In the Pretorium he is invested with the royal purple, indeed, but it is in scorn and mockery. He is crowned; but with thorns. In derision a reed sceptre is thrust into his hands. He is anointed, but with spittle. Contemptuous knees bend to do him homage, and ribald lips hail him king. They wrought wiser than they knew.

The scene changes, and he stands before the Roman Governor. Pilate cannot believe that he will go to his death, self-confessed upon the charge of making himself king. One word of denial will give the desired ground for his release. Pilate seeks it earnestly. He asks him flatly, "Art thou a king then?" The answer comes, clear and distinct, "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." He is bearing "witness unto the truth."

He is sent forth to Golgotha; and his confession goes with him, in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin; and that title has

stood out before the world through the ages, and still stands, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews!"

After his resurrection, he resumes his instructions touching the kingdom. He had sent forth ambassadors; he had said to them, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you;" and now that he is risen from the dead, he appears to them, giving them commandment, and speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And finally the Apostles meet him, as he had commanded them, on a mountain in Galilee, when he lays upon them his last injunction in these mighty words, "All authority (*ἐξουσία*) hath been given me in heaven and on earth; go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"

Thus it was that the Son of Man, beginning his mission in divine obedience, ended his work on earth by committing that mission into the hands of chosen men, who, in the same spirit of obedience, were to continue his authority in the kingdom, *in sæcula sæculorum*.

Thus far we have been chiefly concerned with the external and objective phase of the kingdom of Christ: let us now glance at the mystical and subjective factor of the divine instrumentality for the salvation of the world. In speaking of the invisible phase of the kingdom, we are to deal with mystery even deeper than heretofore; and let it be remembered that a mystery in the theological sense is not simply a truth hard to understand, but a truth which though revealed as a fact, is impossible of final and complete explication. In that mystery of mysteries, the Incarnation, we must bear in mind that Christ took up into his divinity, not the individuality of any one man, but the nature of all men; and thus, in a sense, he was all men—that, as in the beginning, the whole human race was potentially in the first Adam, so the second Adam gathered up into oneness again the whole human

race, *in essentia*, and united it forever with the Divine Personality.

Now, in the first place, Jesus represents his kingdom as a living entity into which man must be born. A ruler of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrim, comes to him privately to inquire about his doctrine. Christ begins at once to speak of the kingdom. He tells this learned Jew that he must be born again, or he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus is astonished—how can a man be born when he is old? The answer is a more specific declaration to the same effect—“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” The Master then tells him that it is not a birth after the flesh, but of the Spirit; and bids him not wonder, pointing him to the inexplicable things before his eyes every day; but for all that, this eminent Jew cannot repress his amazement. He wonderingly exclaims, “How can these things be?” But instead of softening his declarations, the Master goes on to add special emphasis to what he has already said on the subject of this “new birth” of the gospel.

Again, the Divine Master everywhere identifies his kingdom with his own person; so that we are born into him. This organic union with himself is especially brought out in the parable of the vine—“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.” St. Paul everywhere insists upon this mystical union: “We who are many, are one body in Christ.” “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.” Nothing could be more definite than the identity of the person of Christ and his kingdom.

This mystery of the unity of Christ and his Church brings us face to face once more with the wonder which underlies all possible knowing—the “one” and the “many;” but it will not avail to start back under the delusion that we are not committed to it in every way. How the self is one with its manifold psychic and mechanical functions and organs

(the illustration St. Paul uses in this connection), no one pretends to know, nor yet to question. How it is that the Son of Man is the "Vine" and we are the "branches," we cannot fully know until we know what a vine is; and that we shall not know until we know what "being" is, and that can be known to the Ultimate Knower alone.

We are then made members of the kingdom of God, and so members of Christ's Body, in holy baptism; and in that act, are born into Christ in some real though mystical sense; and we live in him, and he in us. But as men are born into the humanity of Adam, according to the order of nature (a mystery quite beyond belief except for experience), so they must be born into the divinity of the second Adam, according to the order of grace.

It is not enough, however, to be born into the natural world; we must live and grow in it; and so it is in the Body of Christ. Life being given, food is necessary to its sustenance; and sustenance is bread. Now, our Lord tells us that he is the "true Bread." This carries us back to that tremendous scene at Capernaum, in which the Carpenter's Son confounds and offends the multitude by declarations such as never before fell upon human ears.

The great concourse of people had been with the Master the day before, in the wilderness, and had seen the miracle of the loaves. They had gathered there again, enthusiastic in their professed discipleship. He tells them that they follow him not for himself, but for what they think they can get from him. They ask what they must do; and he answers that their first work is to believe on him, who had been "sent of God;" that "the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

Up to this time the people are thoroughly with him, but a mighty change is now to take place. He goes on to say, "I am the bread of life"—"I am come down from heaven," "not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me."

The magnitude of such a claim arrests their attention. They begin to murmur, and ask "Is not this Jesus, the son

of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, I came down out of heaven?" Jesus tells them not to murmur, but goes on to repeat the offense with serious aggravations. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

And now the discontent is deep and furious. Will he not tell them that there is no reason for such excitement; that he is but using such metaphorical forms of speech as they are accustomed to? He softens nothing, but as they strive one with another, asking "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" he goes on further to declare, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves."

The Master knows that even his immediate disciples are shaken; but the issue must be fairly joined. They must not think that he speaks of his flesh and blood in a literal and gross sense. He says: "Does this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." But they understood that the demands upon them still remained; for it was then that the people began to desert him; so much so, that, as he saw them departing, he said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" The impetuous and great-hearted Peter, who knew no better than those who were departing how to explain the mystery, but who knew *him*, answered for the Twelve, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God!"

A few months later, the Son of Man is with the Twelve in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. Arrayed as a servant, he has taken water and washed the Apostles' feet; and now, resuming his garments, he sits down and, with infinite pathos, tells them that he, their Master and Lord, has set them an example of how the Master should also serve, and that they whom

he was sending with authority should do to those over whom they were set as he had done to them; ending with the solemn declaration: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."

And now follows the supreme act of his obedience—the culmination of personal union between him and the members of his kingdom. He, the true Lamb, of whom all victims offered under the Aaronic priesthood were but types and shadows; he of whom all priests who had gone before were but adumbrations, and all who have followed after are but missionaries and ministers; himself the Victim—himself the Priest; he makes that "one, full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The All-giver gave himself in his true manhood—our true divinity—an oblation to the Fatherhood of God; and then he gives his disciples to eat of this sacrifice, under the form of bread and wine: "This is my body"—"This is my blood." The true Bread of selflessness—a very spirit of altruism—the meat of perfect obedience—has been communicated to the children of disobedience.

He makes this an act of perpetual obligation by laying his command upon men, "Do this in remembrance of me;" and from this moment in that upper chamber, until the moment he commends his human life into the hands of the Father on the cross, he is but a passive victim. The real sacrifice of obedience, as an act of his human will, was made in that upper chamber. Life and love are the true principles of the gospel, and the suffering and death on the cross are but the seals and testimonies of their reality.

There yet remains one transcendent event which must follow before they, into whose hands he has committed his divine mission, shall rightly know the scope and power of the obligation laid upon them. As in the beginning, God took of his own created elements and formed the body of man, and afterward breathed into it the breath of life, so now, only in an infinitely higher way, Jesus Christ has moulded the hu-

man personalities he had chosen out of the world, into a spiritual unity to be his Mystical Body, and now it must be animated, vivified, and illuminated; and so, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God supplements and completes the work of the Father and of the Son. While the disciples await together the promise they had received of their ascended Lord, the Holy Ghost descends upon them in tongues as of fire; and the mystical Body of Christ is illuminated and inspired with the Spirit of Love to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," for the salvation of the world; the Son of Man, by perfect obedience even unto death, has finished the work he had been sent to accomplish. He has established the kingdom of obedience, the kingdom of love, through which men, moved by the Holy Ghost, can obey, and so for themselves set loving obedience in Christ over against their sins of disobedience.

From that moment the Apostles understood the meaning of the great commission they had received; and they went forth in the power of the Spirit of God, to upbuild the Church in the salvation of men.

We may now see, in some sort, how it is that salvation in and through and by Christ—is in and through and by the Church. The two are one. Just as the physical body was the outward manifestation of the infinite principle of determinism or limitation, and his human heart and mind and will were the exemplification of the no less necessary and infinitely extended principle of determinism in the invisible and psychic mode of actuality—these two together being the incarnation of the universal and primordial principle of free activity in the universe of God; so the Church among men, exhibiting these same characteristics, is the perpetual continuance of the one only and ever-abiding Incarnation of the Son of God, made and maintained a unit by the esoteric bond of the Holy Ghost.

Space does not serve to point out with any fulness how salvation from sin and its penalties is accomplished for all through the Church, which is Christ; but it seems plain

enough, that it stands to man to-day much as the Garden of Eden, with its "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," stood to Adam in the beginning, refined, spiritualized, and glorified. With those people in the world who have not now, and have not had in the past, the Light of the Kingdom, the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," with the power of love and the sense of obligation through the Holy Spirit—all the means of salvation, through what may be called the Natural Kingdom of God—are not the less, through the Eternal Son. But the Revealed Kingdom of Christ, which has brought "Life and immortality to light," makes the way to salvation clear as the day. In the individual life, the requirements of God are the same under the Law and the Gospel, as well as upon those who know neither; namely, obedience to the best and highest law they know. In the kingdom of Christ the knowledge is immeasurably increased, and the responsibility proportionally greater. The motives to walk in the way are powerful, and the end to be accomplished transcendent. But man, with all the new light, and beauty, and opportunity for personal love of his "Elder Brother"—the King who has died for him—is still perfectly free, and must live a true subject in the kingdom of God. He must repent his past rebellion and unfaithfulness, which implies a change of mind and purpose. He must "convert" or turn away from evil—not be "converted." Happily the mistranslation in the Authorized Version of the word ἐπιστροφῆς, is finally and fully corrected in the New Version; and the confusion brought about by the passive form, "be converted," must soon pass. Except ye *turn* and become as little children," says our Lord—not except ye *be* turned or "be converted;" and so in all other places where the passive form is used. We may hope that the unfortunate mistake which has confounded "conversion" with the "new birth" will soon be corrected.

In all its phases, the work of man in the kingdom is of obligation. Faith itself is not a mere passive intellection or impulse of the heart. It is largely under the control of

the will, and a man is answerable for his faith. The two great sacraments—holy baptism, the birth sacrament, and the holy eucharist, the life-sustaining sacrament—are both acts of obedience. Prayer, praise, meditation, self-examination, almsdeeds, purity, honesty, and temperance are, all of them, in and through the Holy Ghost, acts of pure volition. It is a simple fact that every man has within him his own inviolable kingdom of which he is himself king, with paramount allegiance to the sovereignty of God in Christ. It is thus that the Master declares, "the kingdom of God is within you."

If what has been said above is true, or in anywise assented to, there seems no room for argument touching the essential oneness of the Church. As the Body of Christ, it must possess organic unity. As *the* kingdom, there can be no other; and as *a* kingdom all rule and authority must come primarily from its sovereign Lord—Jesus Christ—and, therefore, no man or combination of men can have the right to devise or inaugurate either doctrine or order. No authority in the kingdom of Christ can be rightly exercised which has not been rightly committed.

All this follows from the central truth we have been trying to emphasize, namely, the principle of obedience as the only possible way back from sin to holiness. Starting with this essential psychological truth, we have seen that the work of the Son of Man in conformity with it was first his own obedience, and following therefrom the founding of the kingdom of Christ which lays an imperative demand upon every individual of the human race. To say that there can be no salvation except in Christ and his kingdom, is only to say there can be no good or righteousness independently of a good or right will. To break the order of Christ in his Church, either in doctrine or rule, is, therefore, to disobey, and, in so far, to depart from Christ. Once admit that new churches—that is, churches not receiving authority in orderly sequence from those into whose hands that authority was committed by the sovereign Lord—admit, we say, that

new churches can be set up in the world, and you at once destroy the principle through which holiness is possible; for to follow one's own fancy, or one's own conclusions as to what one would prefer, is not to obey; and whatever originates in wilfulness is empty of authority, *ab initio*, and must remain so until the end.

But it may be fairly asked, what is the order of transmission of this authority? We confine our attention to a single point. Let us place ourselves at a period in the past, when, by the concession of all historians, the Christian priesthood throughout the world actually consisted of three several orders, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, say, to be safe, at the end of the fourth century. Then and for more than a thousand years thereafter no priest or deacon ever had authority given him to send others. How, let us ask all those who recognize the principle of authority at all, could presbyters in the sixteenth century exercise an authority which had never been committed to them? If it were granted (as in the light of history it cannot be) that in the post-apostolic age, all presbyters had equal authority to ordain, it was wholly lost through more than a thousand years; and can never be regained except by a new committal from the sovereign Head of the Church, so long as the episcopal order retains its prerogative. It is from the failure to take in the reality of this kingdom that mere subjectivism finds such place in our day; and leads to the present divided state of Christendom and to that mistiness and individualism which is called "Broad."

We return to our question, What is the Church? and cannot do better than answer as at first, but it is hoped with fuller meaning—The kingdom of God on earth—the Mystical Body of Christ. Its office and use is the salvation of men from the disorder of sin and from its penalties. It is the divine instrument for the union and communion of man with Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, restoring him to spiritual soundness, and inspiring in him the spirit of worship and adoration, the spirit of divine altruism.

F. A. S.